

Marine Corps War College



MISSION

The mission of the Marine Corps War College is to educate selected senior officers and civilians for decision-making during war and military operations other than war in a joint, interagency, and multinational environment. Marine Corps War College graduates are prepared to assume senior leadership positions of increasing complexity through the study of national military strategy, theater strategy and plans, and military support to those strategies within the context of national security policies, decision-making, objectives, and resources.

DEGREE

Marine Corps War College graduates receive a Master of Strategic Studies (MSS) degree.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Provide an encompassing and pragmatic intellectual foundation from which to apply the art and science of war in assessing past, present, and future national security and national military strategies.
- Analyze, evaluate, and apply the relationships among policy and strategy; political, economic and social forces; and the application of joint military power within the global context of national security issues.
- Develop students sensitive to, and skilled in, the employment of joint and multinational military forces to achieve national objectives.
- Provide graduates a war college education focusing on combining operational competence with sound military judgment, decision making skills, and strategic thinking.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The Marine Corps War College employs active teaching methods to provide a professional educational experience where students are accountable to both the faculty and their peers for their contribution. The small student body and low student-to-faculty ratio enhance this active learning experience.

Instructional methods and techniques include extensive reading, seminars, formal and informal presentations, tutorials, case studies, research, writing, war games, decision exercises, and examinations.

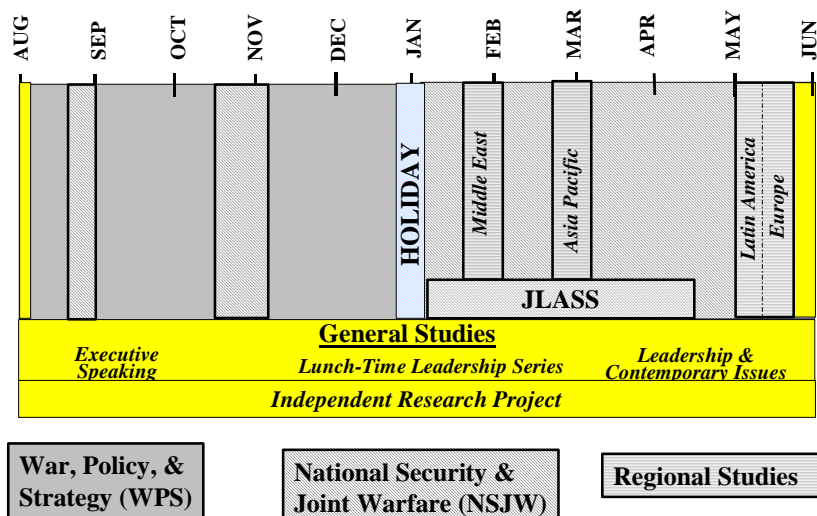
The College acknowledges that senior military and civilian leaders must complement competence in national defense matters with an understanding of the political, economic, social, and informational environments, which influence the formulation of national strategy. Domestic and international travel provides opportunities to meet with senior government and civilian leaders who share responsibility for formulating national policy and strategy. Such travel, integrated throughout the curriculum, complements the National Security and Joint Warfare course and the Regional Studies course. This travel provides a global perspective and framework upon which students can base their analysis, assessment, formulation, and application of national and military strategy.

These active learning methods require diligence, self-discipline, and time for preparation and reflection. Accordingly, well planned professional study and preparation time (PSPT) is a vital aspect of the War College's curriculum. This PSPT is integrated throughout each academic course as time students may use to prepare for each class.

CURRICULUM

The Marine Corps War College's curriculum consists of:

- War, Policy and Strategy
- National Security and Joint Warfare
- Regional Studies
- General Studies



War, Policy and Strategy

The War, Policy and Strategy course is about critical analysis and judgment primarily at the strategic level of war. It emphasizes the relationship between moral and physical dynamics of war, and between national military power and other elements of national power, as factors contributing to national success or failure in war.

Sir Michael Howard and President Dwight Eisenhower offer the following admonitions on the strategic level of war:

- "Wars are not tactical exercises writ large. They are ... conflicts of societies, and they can be fully understood only if one understands the

nature of the society fighting them. The roots of victory or defeat often have to be sought far from the battlefield, in political, social, and economic factors....” (Howard)

- “No mastery of command can substitute for an intelligent comprehension of the economic goals, the political impulses, the spiritual aspirations, that move tens of millions of people....” (Eisenhower)

War, Policy and Strategy emphasizes “holistic” strategic and military effectiveness – i.e., that individual actions and applications of national power, and especially national military power, at all levels of war (strategic, theater-strategic, operational and tactical) must act collectively in a synergistic manner, instead of working at cross purposes. Otherwise, so-called smart and clever moves at the lower levels of war can have decisive adverse psychological and psychosocial consequences at the strategic level of war. War, Policy and Strategy emphasizes that successful national strategies in all types of conflicts – including conventional war – are made up of a political and a military component tailored to enemy and friendly strengths and weaknesses.

This construct is commonly understood in counterinsurgency strategies and campaigns (e.g. the Vietnam War); it is less commonly understood by senior military officers as an explanation for Napoleon’s defeats in the Peninsular War and in Russia, for Union and Confederate successes and failures in the Civil War, for ultimate German defeat in World War I, and for German and Japanese defeat in World War II.

War, Policy and Strategy therefore stresses the importance of senior political and military leaders asking the right questions at the outset (or early stages) of any conflict: What do we know about the enemy nation – its culture, society, history, economy, psychology? This involves looking beyond enemy orders of battles and traditional indicators of military strength. What is the true nature of the conflict? What are the likely limitations of military power in this conflict? What is the relation between the military and political end states? Is the enemy’s concept and definition of defeat the same as ours? Is our national strategy and national military strategy in harmony with the requirements of holistic strategic and military effectiveness? Do we have a viable military strategy of perception control? These and similar associated questions define an intellectual process at the strategic level of war which we at the Marine Corps War College call “Capital W War.” A persistent recurring historical theme is that when Capital W War thinking is out of balance, operational and tactical successes are more difficult to achieve and/or may be irrelevant.

War, Policy and Strategy stresses that national success in war and conflict requires not only a sound strategy but *the practical application of that strategy at the operational and tactical levels* – and that strategic thinkers and decision-makers bear some responsibility for formulating strategies which can be successfully executed at the operational and tactical levels. It does little good, for example, to address (and attempt to fix) British “strategy” associated with the 1915 Dardanelles campaign without also addressing causes for the dismal tactical and operational failures which will be forever associated with the word “Gallipoli”.

War, Policy and Strategy is not a traditional military history course, but instead uses selected wars, strategies and campaigns as vehicles for critical

analysis and assessment, with the objective of developing sounder and keener instincts at the strategic level of war.

National Security and Joint Warfare

History demonstrates that to formulate and implement successful national security policies, senior national leaders must be able to wisely orchestrate the four elements of national power: diplomatic, informational (psychological), military, and economic (DIME). It is essential that senior military leaders develop an in-depth understanding of the interplay of these elements so that proper military advice is provided to civilian leadership and a sound military strategy is developed.

For the Marine Corps War College, developing an in-depth understanding begins in the War, Policy and Strategy (WPS) course and carries through the Regional Studies Program where students broaden their understanding of national power in a theater/regional or multinational context. Both of these courses complement the National Security and Joint Warfare (NSJW) Course, designed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of both national security affairs (focusing on the national security decision-making process) and joint warfare (focusing on the role of the military in national security). The NSJW course examines the relationship between the National Security Strategy and national military objectives and strategy as delineated in the National Military Strategy. In doing so, NSJW explores the context within which military advice is rendered, policy and strategy decisions are made, and military operations are carried out. Key to this are command and personal relationships at the highest levels of the U.S. national security establishment (President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Staff, and the unified command Combatant Commander), during peace, war, and small-scale contingencies.

The economics portion of NSJW introduces students to macroeconomics and the interrelationships of economic security and national security. A nation's economic condition heavily impacts its ability to apply national power and thus, impacts national security. The importance of a nation's domestic economic condition as it relates to the viability of its military power and capacity to mobilize for conflicts is explored both in NSJW and throughout the academic year in the following themes:

- Central role of economic strength in maintaining and projecting national power.
- Growing interdependence of the global economic environment and impact of this interdependence on national power.
- Global move to the market system and free enterprise.

As the world grows more interdependent, economic power will increasingly share center stage with military power as supporting instruments for diplomatic influence abroad. NSJW delves into the relationships between the strategic and operational levels of war and the procedures by which a commander translates national policy objectives into theater-strategic military objectives. Current Joint and Service doctrines, the factors influencing their development, and conflicts between Service and Joint doctrine are examined with discussion revolving around resolution of any such conflict(s). NSJW includes an assessment of capabilities and limitations of the U.S. Armed Forces and the national military command structure/system.

During the NSJW course, students are provided ample opportunity to explore and assess joint planning procedures and the ability of combatant commanders to reconcile national objectives and available means. Students develop commander's estimates of the situation, commander's concepts, and theater-level campaign plans for joint and multinational operations in various theater contexts. A major portion of the NSJW course is devoted to a wargame known as the Joint Land, Aerospace, and Sea Simulation (JLASS) with participation from all Senior Service College. Students plan for and play the roles of The Joint Staff, warfighting regional Combatant Commanders, and service components in this dynamic, seven-day wargame conducted at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. JLASS provides students a unique opportunity to apply principles and concepts learned during the academic year.

The NSJW course takes advantage of the Marine Corps War College's close proximity to Washington D.C. by traveling to the Pentagon, the State Department, the Congress, and think-tanks to discuss issues with civilian and military leaders.

The next generation of senior officers and leaders must be prepared to think critically and creatively in the broad arena of challenging issues associated with our national security—to lead and perform in an environment of accelerating change. NSJW and the other courses offered in the Marine Corps War College curriculum are aimed at graduating officers better prepared for the challenges of joint and coalition operations.

Regional Studies

The Regional Studies Program takes a strategic look at the Middle East, Latin America, Europe, and the Pacific Rim. The program is integrated throughout the academic year and focuses on the cultures, politics, economics, and U.S. national objectives within vital regions of the world. The course uses military leaders, visiting scholars thoroughly attuned to world dynamics, and visits to and discussions with the nation's foremost military leaders and civilian authorities to provide a multi-dimensional perspective for the intelligent analysis of U.S. global interests, regional policy objectives, and the formulation of effective strategies.

Interwoven throughout the Regional Studies courses are visits to several combatant commands (CONUS & OCONUS), Asia, and Europe. These trips are conducted concurrently with or augment previous regional studies and give the students an opportunity to examine theater warfare from the perspective of a combatant commander and his service component.

General Studies

General Studies combines the remainder of the academic curriculum under one course director. General Studies includes an independent research project, executive speaking course, lunchtime leadership series, and a Leadership and Ethics course. These studies address relationships between leadership skills and organizational success. The curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for discussion with key civilian and military leaders.

The Independent Research Project provides each student the forum to develop, analyze, and assess issues relevant to the Marine Corps War College curriculum. The research and resulting paper are scholarly efforts drawing original conclusion(s) from the author's extensive research. This project reflects the author's ability to research, organize, analyze, and effectively communicate through the written medium—skills essential to leadership.

The paper should be suitable for publication in a professional journal (e.g., Joint Force Quarterly or Proceedings).

The Executive Speaking course is an intensive skill-building workshop in advanced oral communications. The focus is directed at organized, focused, action-oriented, and persuasive presentations. The course includes videotaped presentations, techniques of dealing with the media, and individualized delivery techniques.

The lunchtime leadership series provides a forum for students and invited guests to explore and exchange views on leadership, current or emerging issues, experiences, and philosophies. These opportune leadership seminar-style lunches are conducted throughout the academic year with focus on national and military policies and programs relating to topical interests and issues.

The Leadership and Ethics course provides a discussion of contemporary leadership issues, an examination of Just War Theory, and capstone discussion of the duties of a professional military Officer.

Joint Professional Military Education

Integrated into the Marine Corps War College curriculum is the first phase of the two-phased Joint Specialty Officer (JSO) education mandated by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As a result, all graduates of the College are "JPME Phase I" qualified in terms of JSO designation.

Service Senior Level Colleges (SLC) focus on national military strategy as derived from national security strategy and policy, and its impact on strategic leadership, force readiness, theater strategy and campaigning. SLC subject matter is inherently joint; JPME at this level focuses on the development of joint attitudes and perspectives.

This program of joint instruction is described in a separate syllabus titled "Joint Professional Military Education (JPME)" which addresses the six primary learning areas identified in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction Officer Professional Military Education Policy:

- National Security Strategy
- National Planning Systems and Processes
- National Military Strategy and Organization
- Theater Strategy and Campaigning
- Information Operations, Command and Control and Battle Space awareness
- Joint Strategic Leader Development

Recurring Themes

Recurring themes maintain student orientation and focus, bind together educational and developmental goals, and establish clear relationships between diverse aspects of individual course and the overall objectives of the curriculum.

The following themes are representative of those that guide critical thinking, analysis, and application throughout the College curriculum:

- Nature and dynamics of war/military operations other than war.
- Application/relevance of military theory.
- Causes of conflict.
- Relationship of the elements of national power to the application of military power in the international environment.
- Principles of War (W/w - strategic and operational levels of war).

- Holistic military effectiveness and the relationship among the political, strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war.
- Joint/multinational/coalition warfare/campaigning.
- Role of the United States Armed Forces in national security.
- Lessons learned for future development.
- Military leadership and professional ethics.
- Total Force planning and employment.

MASTER OF STRATEGIC STUDIES

All MCWAR students who successfully complete the MCWAR curriculum earn the Master of Strategic Studies degree.

The requirements for acceptance into the Master of Strategic Studies degree program are identical to the College's admissions requirements.

STUDENT EVALUATION

The College's evaluation system parallels other Service Senior Level Colleges by establishing and emphasizing high academic standards appropriate to graduate-level education. Grading by course directors is based on a variety of oral and written evaluations with an emphasis on quality seminar contribution. Grades of A, B, C, D or Incomplete may be assigned.

However, only an A or B represents an acceptable level of performance. A course grade of B- is considered the minimal acceptable grade to complete a course. A grade of C+ or less is considered below the level of performance expected. Students who receive a course grade below B- are counseled by the specific course director and require remediation.

AWARDS

- **Distinguished Graduate Program.** The Marine Corps War College's Distinguished Graduate Program is designed to recognize superior achievement and encourage the highest degree of excellence. At the end of the academic year, the Marine Corps War College faculty selects the top two officers in the class, based upon a holistic evaluation of the officer's leadership qualities and superior academic performance, with emphasis on academic performance. These officers are recognized during the graduation ceremony, awarded a cash prize from the Marine Corps University Foundation, and their official records are appropriately annotated.
- **Faculty Writing Award.** The Faculty Writing Award is presented to the Marine Corps War College student whose research paper is determined to be most suitable for publication in a professional journal for that academic year. All Marine Corps War College student research papers will be considered for this award. The winner will be presented the Faculty Writing Award (i.e., a plaque and a gift certificate to the MCA bookstore) at the graduation ceremony.

STUDENT BODY

School seats are based on allocations granted by the Commandant of the Marine Corps which support the mission/purpose of the College and reflect the requirements of the United States Marine Corps; the joint/multinational education criteria of the Officer Professional Military Education Policy

Document for other U. S. military students; and inter-agency agreements with other Federal Government agencies. Quotas for admission to the Marine Corps War College are distributed as follows:

U.S. Marine Corps Officers	7
U.S. Navy Officers	2
U.S. Coast Guard Officers	1
U.S. Air Force Officers	2
U.S. Army Officers	2
Civilians, U.S. Federal Government*	2
TOTAL	16

*Civilian Federal Government employees (usually from the Department of State, Federal Bureau of Investigation, or Central Intelligence Agency). MCWAR encourages civilian participation in its programs to promote dialogue and understanding among all members of the United States interagency community.

REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL: Eligibility prerequisites for the Marine Corps War College are those regulations and requirements established by the military services to select students to attend a senior-level professional military education (PME) institution. Specific admissions prerequisites for the Marine Corps War College are as follows:

- Grade: O-5/O-6 (LtCol/Col, CDR/CAPT) for military officers; GS/GM-14/15 for Federal Government civilian employees.
- Security Clearance: Possess a Top Secret/Special Compartmentalized Information (TS/SCI) clearance that will not expire during the academic year.
- Passport: Possess an official business or diplomatic passport that will not expire during the academic year.
- Professional experience that will allow the student to interact in interagency discussions.
- Suitability for future service and increased responsibility. MCWAR expects that sponsoring agencies will select students who have demonstrated leadership, skill, and resourcefulness in difficult assignments, and have demonstrated sound performance in an academic environment.
- Marine Corps officers must meet O-4 PME requirements as identified in the USMC PME Order (MCO P1553.4A).

ACADEMIC: Instruction at the Marine Corps War College is at the graduate-level using rigorous, interactive, adult learning techniques based on an inquiry-driven educational philosophy. Inherent is the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. An active conference/seminar based learning environment is intentionally structured to promote intellectual growth and to allow for varied input during student dialog and discussion. The faculty-led small group interactions are the strength of the Marine Corps War College educational experience. Students are required to synthesize large amounts of information, present solutions to complex problems, and participate actively in graduate-level educational forums. Students can also expect to directly interact with national and international leaders. Specific academic requirements are as follows:

- A regionally accredited undergraduate degree (United States bachelor's degree or its equivalent).

- Graduate-level capabilities to read, comprehend, speak, and write in English*
- Upon successful completion of the MCWAR curriculum, graduates will be awarded a Master of Strategic Studies degree.

*Up to 50% of a course grade is determined by a student's seminar participation, which includes small group discussion, debate, and oral briefings.

PHYSICAL AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS: The Marine Corps War College curriculum is dynamic and interactive. Students are required to travel and actively participate in various educational forums. Specific physical and skill requirements are as follows:

- Small-group interaction in wargame scenarios and practical application exercises, which requires individual and group military, planning, map reading, and briefing skills.
- Must meet the physical fitness and height/weight requirements for their respective military service or Federal Government agency.
- Active participation in battlefield staff rides, which includes walking, hiking, and analyzing the battlefield's terrain, role-playing, and conducting on-site, oral briefs.
- Nominees with special medical needs are advised that medical care may not be available while traveling or conducting battlefield staff rides at remote and overseas locations. This should be considered prior to nomination.

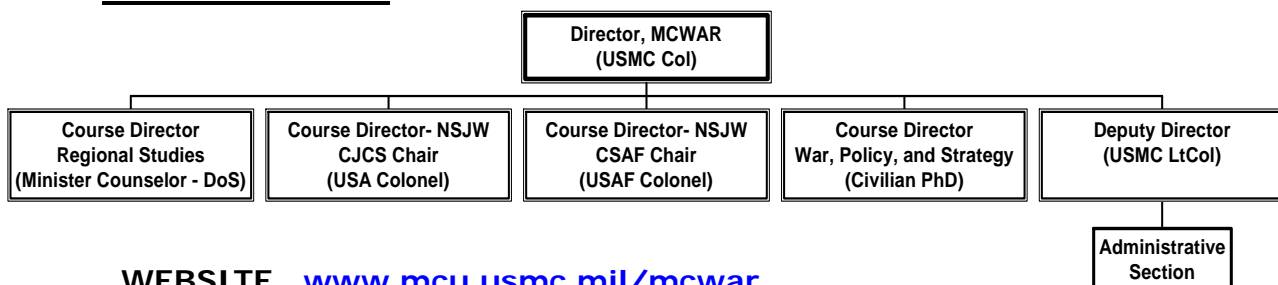
ADMISSIONS POLICY

Admission to the Marine Corps War College (MCWAR) is based on allocations granted by the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The MCWAR Admissions Policy supports the mission and purpose of the College and reflects the needs of the United States Marine Corps and the educational criteria of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Officer Professional Military Education Policy. The MCWAR student body consists of two distinct student populations: U.S. military officers and Federal Government civilian employees. Invitation, nomination, and admission to the College vary by student type: U.S. military officers are admitted through their services' selection/assignment processes; Federal Government civilian employees are admitted through an invitational nomination and approval process.

All inquiries regarding admission should be directed to:

Director, Marine Corps War College
 Marine Corps University
 2076 South Street
 Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068
 Phone: (703) 784-4081 FAX: (703) 784-2384 Military DSN 278-4082

ORGANIZATION



WEBSITE www.mcu.usmc.mil/mcwar